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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 002113

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF AND INR
NSC FOR FRAZER

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [SL](#) [IV](#) [SU](#) [ZI](#) [LY](#) [CG](#) [LI](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: NSA MOHAMMED DISCUSSES AFRICA ISSUES

REF: A. ABUJA 1587 AND PREVIOUS

[1](#)B. PERRY-BOOTH 8/17 EMAIL

(U) Classified by Ambassador Howard F. Jeter; Reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Ambassador Jeter, accompanied by PolMilOff, called on NSA Aliyu Mohammed on August 22. LTC Idris, the NSA's Military Advisor also attended. In addition to security assistance, UNAMSIL troop rotations, the WCAR and counter-narcotics (septels), the Ambassador and NSA discussed Nigeria's perspectives on a number of African conflicts, including Sudan, the DROC, Sierra Leone, and Liberia's impact on Cote d'Ivoire, offering a virtual tour d'horizon on conflict situations around the Continent.

[1](#)2. (C) SUDAN: The NSA emphasized that President Obasanjo had received a number of Sudanese representatives in the past months, including al-Mahdi, Garang, General Joseph Lagu, Bona Malwal and others. Francis Deng was expected soon from Washington. Malwal had informed the President that the Southern Sudanese Civic Forum had decided to organize a conference to discuss Sudan and form a common position among the southern groups. Nigeria had agreed to host the conference of Southern Sudanese leaders in October (if the various groups would agree to attend), which would ideally lead them to unite in support of a "One Sudan" policy. The NSA described a possible outcome of a "One Sudan" policy as "southern autonomy in some things -- a federation -- like Nigeria."

[1](#)3. (C) Later, Joseph Lagu had suggested that both Southern and Northern conferences were needed, to discuss terms for progress, and President Obasanjo had agreed to work with Egypt and Libya to arrange a conference of Northern Sudanese leaders. The NSA described the IGAD process as "dead," but said Turabi had suggested a September meeting in Tripoli as an opportunity to bring about a cease-fire and negotiations, and build support for the Nigerian process. The meeting in Tripoli would include Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Libya and Egypt. Mohammed stated that President Obasanjo would go to the meeting in Libya directly after his participation in the WCAR in Durban. Meanwhile, Nigeria planned to send its envoy, Dr. Usman Bugaje (Vice President Atiku Abubakar's Special Advisor on Political Affairs) to Sudan on August 24 to begin discussions.

[1](#)4. (C) DROC: The NSA stated that Nigeria had been developing a plan for the DROC that would include a Presidential Council with a rotating chairmanship of three to five people to rule the country for an initial period of up to five years. In addition, an Executive Secretary to the Council would be appointed, ideally from an Anglophone African country. Ultimately, within five years, democratic elections would be held on the ward, local, regional and national levels.

[1](#)5. (C) Mohammed said the current leadership in DROC had not been informed about the plan; he dismissed Kabila as "illegitimate" and in power without a democratic mandate. The NSA alluded to questions about Kabila's nationality (stories that Kabila is possibly a Tutsi from Rwanda), and emphasized that Kabila is only in power because of support from neighboring states, particularly Zimbabwe. Moreover, Kabila only controlled 40 percent of the country. Ambassador Jeter asked about the role of Botswana in the DROC. The NSA dismissed the relevance of Botswana, saying that Masire had not done a good job. (The NSA was aware, however, of the gathering of Congolese parties in Botswana to begin preparations for the National Conference.)

[1](#)6. (C) Mohammed said the plan Nigeria is putting forward would require 30,000 African peacekeeping troops, and a good amount of money from the U.S., UN and EU. He emphasized that, in the 1960s, there had been 24,000 troops and 2000

civilian personnel in the DROC. A similar solution was needed now. When Ambassador Jeter noted that the cost of such an operation would be "colossal," Mohammed agreed, but said it was worth the cost because of the DROC's strategic location, wealth in resources, and the impact of Congo's instability on neighboring states. When asked if Nigeria had discussed the plan with other African states, the NSA felt sure that the plan had only been discussed with the U.S. so far, but Obasanjo planned soon to raise it with the EU. If the U.S. and EU agreed with the plan and would support it financially, African countries would fall into line.

17. (C) SIERRA LEONE: Mohammed gave a positive read-out on Sierra Leone. He noted that President Kabbah recently had been to Abuja for a meeting with President Obasanjo, that peace was returning and disarmament was progressing. Mohammed offered the continuing RUF disarmament as an example of a major step forward. President Obasanjo would travel to Sierra Leone on September 3 to meet with Kabbah. He would then travel with Kabbah to meet with RUF leader Issa Sessay in Kono, and there call on the RUF to disarm. Ambassador Jeter asked if the GON had contact with Omre Golley. Mohammed said discussion with Golley may have taken place, but "not with me."

18. (C) LIBERIA/COTE D'IVOIRE: The NSA noted that Charles Taylor was "tired now" and seemed to want peace. The NSA said that Nigeria's greatest present concern was Taylor's meddling in Cote d'Ivoire. Ambassador Jeter, noting that Taylor was a manipulator, asked Mohammed how Nigeria planned to blunt Taylor's effort with General Guei, emphasizing that Taylor would listen to Nigeria. Mohammed stated that the GON had been in contact with President Gbagbo on this issue, and had asked Gbagbo to mention these concerns to the French, who have "sympathy" for Taylor. The NSA also expected that Konare would "discuss it for Taylor's ears," implying an indirect warning from the ECOWAS Chairman. He said that the GON had not yet approached Taylor directly, but assured us that Obasanjo would do so. He concluded, "We know Charles Taylor well enough not to trust him."

19. (C) ZIMBABWE: Ambassador Jeter asked the NSA where Nigeria stood on Zimbabwe, now that the Commonwealth meeting in Abuja had been postponed. The NSA said he had assured Dr. Rice at the NSC that Nigeria would not let Qadhafi, who had met with Mugabe after the OAU Summit in Lusaka, damage chances for stability in Zimbabwe. Obasanjo had promised to talk to Qadhafi to warn him against meddling in that country.

110. (C) COMMENT: President Obasanjo continues to engage across Africa on a number of conflicts, often at the expense of pressing issues at home. Thus far, he appears to be bringing his considerable weight to bear to bring parties closer together, to negotiate their differences rather than continue their resort to force of arms. We continue to be impressed by Nigeria's activism on the Continent and its attempts to try to bring closure to conflict situations in the sub-region. However, as Nigeria's "solution" on the DROC demonstrates, some of its plans and proposals are often expensive propositions for non-regional players. END COMMENT.

111. (U) Freetown minimize considered.
Jeter